

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Please cancel claims 1-16, 22, and 23 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend claims 17-19 and 21 and add new claims 24-28 as follows:

Claims 1-16 (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for producing a silicon carbide single crystal where a silicon carbide single crystal substrate that is a seed crystal is disposed inside a container and a source material for the silicon carbide single crystal is supplied to grow the silicon carbide single crystal on the silicon carbide single crystal substrate, the apparatus characterized in that:

a protection layer is formed on a back surface the silicon carbide single crystal substrate;

a supporting part is provided on a an inner wall of the container for disposing the silicon carbide single crystal substrate to a predetermined position in the container, ~~and~~

wherein the supporting part supports ~~mechanically~~ the silicon carbide single crystal substrate at a periphery of a back surface of the silicon carbide single crystal substrate such that ~~a gap with predetermined width is provided between the protection layer of the silicon carbide single crystal substrate and the inner wall of the container~~ an entire front surface of the silicon carbide single crystal substrate faces the source material to grow the silicon carbide single crystal on a front surface.

18. (Currently Amended) The apparatus for producing a silicon carbide single crystal as in claim 17, further characterized in that:

an opening is formed in a wall of the container at a position facing the protection layer of the silicon carbide single crystal substrate; and

a lid-shaped member is provided so as to close the opening ~~and to adjust the predetermined width of the gap.~~

19. (Currently Amended) The apparatus for producing a silicon carbide single crystal as in claim 17, further characterized in that:

the protection layer is one of a carbon layer, a layer of carbide with metal having a high melting point, a silicon carbide epitaxial layer, a silicon carbide polycrystalline layer, a silicon carbide amorphous layer ~~or~~ and a multilayer film constituted of the above layers.

20. (Original) An apparatus for producing a silicon carbide single crystal where a silicon carbide single crystal substrate that is a seed crystal is disposed inside a container and a source material for the silicon carbide single crystal is supplied to grow the silicon carbide single crystal on the silicon carbide single crystal substrate, the apparatus characterized in that:

the silicon carbide single crystal substrate having a protection layer on a back surface is disposed so as to close an opening formed in a wall of the container;

the silicon carbide single crystal substrate is supported by a supporting part disposed on a side wall defining the opening; and

the protection layer is exposed to an outside space.

21. (Currently Amended) A substrate for growing a silicon carbide single crystal, comprising:

a silicon carbide single crystal substrate, which is a seed crystal; and

a protection layer formed on a back surface of the silicon carbide single crystal substrate, wherein

a front surface of the silicon carbide single crystal substrate has a supported face supported by a supporting part and disposed at a periphery of the front surface; and

a growth face projecting from a plane including the supported face disposed on a center of the front surface and projecting toward a source material, the growth face for growing the silicon carbide single crystal.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (New) An apparatus for producing a silicon carbide single crystal where a silicon carbide single crystal substrate that is a seed crystal is disposed inside a container and a source material for the silicon carbide single crystal is supplied to grow the silicon carbide single crystal on the silicon carbide single crystal substrate, the apparatus

characterized in that:

a protection layer is formed on a back surface the silicon carbide single crystal substrate;

a supporting part is provided on an inner wall of the container for disposing the silicon carbide single crystal substrate to a predetermined position in the container,

wherein the supporting part mechanically supports the silicon carbide single crystal substrate at a periphery of the substrate such that a gap with a predetermined width is provided between the protection layer of the silicon carbide single crystal substrate and an inner wall of the container;

an opening is formed in a wall of the container at a position facing the protection layer of the silicon carbide single crystal substrate; and

a lid-shaped member is provided so as to close the opening and to adjust the predetermined width of the gap.

25. (New) The apparatus for producing a silicon carbide single crystal as in claim 17, further characterized in that: a gap with predetermined width is provided between the protection layer of the silicon carbide single crystal substrate and an inner wall of the container.

26. (New) The apparatus for producing a silicon carbide single crystal as in claim 17, further characterized in that: the supporting part supports the substrate by being adhered to the substrate with an adhesive.

27. (New) The apparatus for producing a silicon carbide single crystal as in claim 20, further characterized in that: the protection layer is a carbon layer that enables a temperature of the silicon carbide single crystal substrate to be monitored from the outside space.

28. (New) The apparatus for producing a silicon carbide single crystal as in claim 21, further characterized in that: the growth face has a conically shaped inner surface that protrudes from the supported face.